

CAPSULE SUMMARY

BA-1082

414 Railroad Avenue

East Towson, Baltimore County

Circa 1900

Private

The dwelling at 414 Railroad Avenue was constructed circa 1900 in the East Towson neighborhood of Baltimore County. The history of East Towson dates from the purchase of one-and-a-quarter acres of land by Daniel Harris in September 1853. This is believed to be the first documented African-American landholding in Towson, and is among the oldest such ethnic enclave in Baltimore County. Further, manumitted slaves and/or descendents of former slaves, many of who were owned by Charles Ridgely, populated the neighborhood. Hampered by the low economic status of the residents, development in the 19th century was slow, increasing after the turn of the 20th century. The setting of the property, building styles, and construction materials were guided by the limited economic status of the residents and their desire to establish a neighborhood of their own without the assistance of white architects, builders, and craftsmen. By 1927, the community was ninety-five percent improved with single-family dwellings, social buildings, a school, and religious structures.

Fronting north, this single-family dwelling is sited on a large level grassy lot with a gravel driveway and is surrounded by several mature trees, shrubs and a chain link fence. Constructed in several phases, the first of this vernacular house being the two-story side gable roof section of possible log construction sitting on a solid random rubble stone foundation. This section is three bays wide with a center entrance and two window bays on the second story. Sliding-glass doors, not original to the house flank the replacement single-leaf metal door. Across the façade of this section is a shed roof porch supported with square posts. Rising above the roof is an exterior shouldered brick chimney. The next construction period of the building is the projecting front gable addition to the east elevation. This Queen Anne-style section is two bays wide and two-and-a-half and sits on a poured concrete foundation. The first story is lighted with a set of paired 1/1 double-hung vinyl sash windows flanked by a single-leaf wood paneled door. Placed in the center of the front gable is a diamond-shaped single-light fixed window. The entire house is re-clad with vinyl siding, and the roof is covered with asphalt shingles. There are several one and two story additions made to the side and rear elevations of the dwelling.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA-- 1082

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic

other

2. Location

street and number 414 Railroad Avenue not for publication

city, town Baltimore vicinity

county Baltimore County

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Arthur M. Cooper

street and number 414 Railroad Avenue telephone Not Available

city, town Baltimore state MD zip code 21286-5411

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore County Courthouse liber 6301 folio 603

city, town Towson tax map 70A tax parcel 227 tax ID number 910452810

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
☐ Other: _____

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	1 buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	1 sites
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> defense	1 structures
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic	1 objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> education	1 Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory
			1

7. Description

Inventory No. BA- 1082

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Fronting north, this single-family dwelling is sited on a large level grassy lot with a gravel driveway and is surrounded by several mature trees, shrubs and a chain link fence. Constructed in several phases, the first of this vernacular house being the two-story side gable roof section of possible log construction sitting on a solid random rubble stone foundation. This section is three bays wide with a center entrance and two window bays on the second story. Sliding-glass doors, not original to the house flank the replacement single-leaf metal door. Across the façade of this section is a shed roof porch supported with square posts. Rising above the roof is an exterior shouldered brick chimney. The next construction period of the building is the projecting front gable addition to the east elevation. This Queen Anne-style section is two bays wide and two-and-a-half stories in height and sits on a poured concrete foundation. The first story is lighted with a set of paired 1/1 double-hung vinyl sash windows flanked by a single-leaf wood paneled door. Placed in the center of the front gable is a diamond-shaped single-light fixed window. The entire house is re-clad with vinyl siding, and the roof is covered with asphalt shingles. There are several one and two story additions made to the side and rear elevations of the dwelling.

There is one circa 1940 shed associated with this property. A double-leaf plywood door is the entrance on this gable front building re-clad with plywood.

8. Significance

Inventory No. BA- 1082

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

Specific dates	Circa 1900	Architect/Builder	Unknown
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Construction dates	Circa 1900
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Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The house at 414 Railroad Avenue was constructed circa 1900 in the East Towson neighborhood of Baltimore County. East Towson is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, specifically the pre-Civil War development of an African-American neighborhood in a predominately white community. The history of this property dates from the purchase of one-and-a-quarter acres of land by Daniel Harris in September 1853. This is believed to be the first documented African-American landholding in Towson, and is among the oldest such ethnic enclave in Baltimore County. Further, manumitted slaves and/or descendents of former slaves, many of who were owned by Charles Ridgely, populated the neighborhood. Hampered by the low economic status of the residents, development in the 19th century was slow, increasing after the turn of the 20th century. The setting of the property, building styles, and construction materials were guided by the limited economic status of the residents and their desire to establish a neighborhood of their own without the assistance of white architects, builders, and craftsmen. By 1927, the community was ninety-five percent improved with single-family dwellings, social buildings, a school, and religious structures. Many of the current homeowners and tenants living in the neighborhood are descendents of the first African-American residents.

East Towson as a whole is representative of an important phase of architectural development in Baltimore County, illustrating the dilution of popular architectural styles to more efficiently meet the needs of the neighborhood, and the builders' untrained abilities to execute the fashionable ornamentation. Thus, East Towson provided lower cost housing in a more suburban neighborhood, rather than the urban setting their economic status typically perpetuated.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. BA- 1082

Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland. Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877.

Baltimore County Historic Inventory.

Brooks, Neal A. and Eric G. Rockel. *A History of Baltimore County.* Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979.

Map of Baltimore County. Philadelphia, PA: G. W. Bromley, 1915.

Scharf, J. Thomas. *History of Baltimore City and County From the Earliest Period to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men.* Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881. Reprinted by Higginson Book Company, Salem, MA.

Sidney, J. C. *Map of the City and County of Baltimore, Maryland, from Original Surveys.* Baltimore, MD: James M. Stephens, 1850.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property .36 Acre

Acreage of historical setting Unknown

Quadrangle name Towson

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The house is located at 414 Railroad Avenue in East Towson in the Ninth District of Baltimore County. It has historically been associated with Tax Map 70A, Parcel 227 since its construction between 1890 and 1905.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	K. Baynard, R. Weidlich, J. Bunting, Architectural Historians		
organization	EHT Traceries, Incorporated	date	December 26, 2001
street & number	1121 5th Street NW	telephone	202.393.1199
city or town	Washington	state	DC

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

East Towson: Planimetric Data



BA #:1082
Name: House, 414 Railroad Avenue
East Towson
Baltimore County



Prepared by:
Baltimore County Office of Planning
401 Bosley Avenue
Towson, Maryland 21204
June, 2001



Scale

1 inch = 200 feet

1:2400

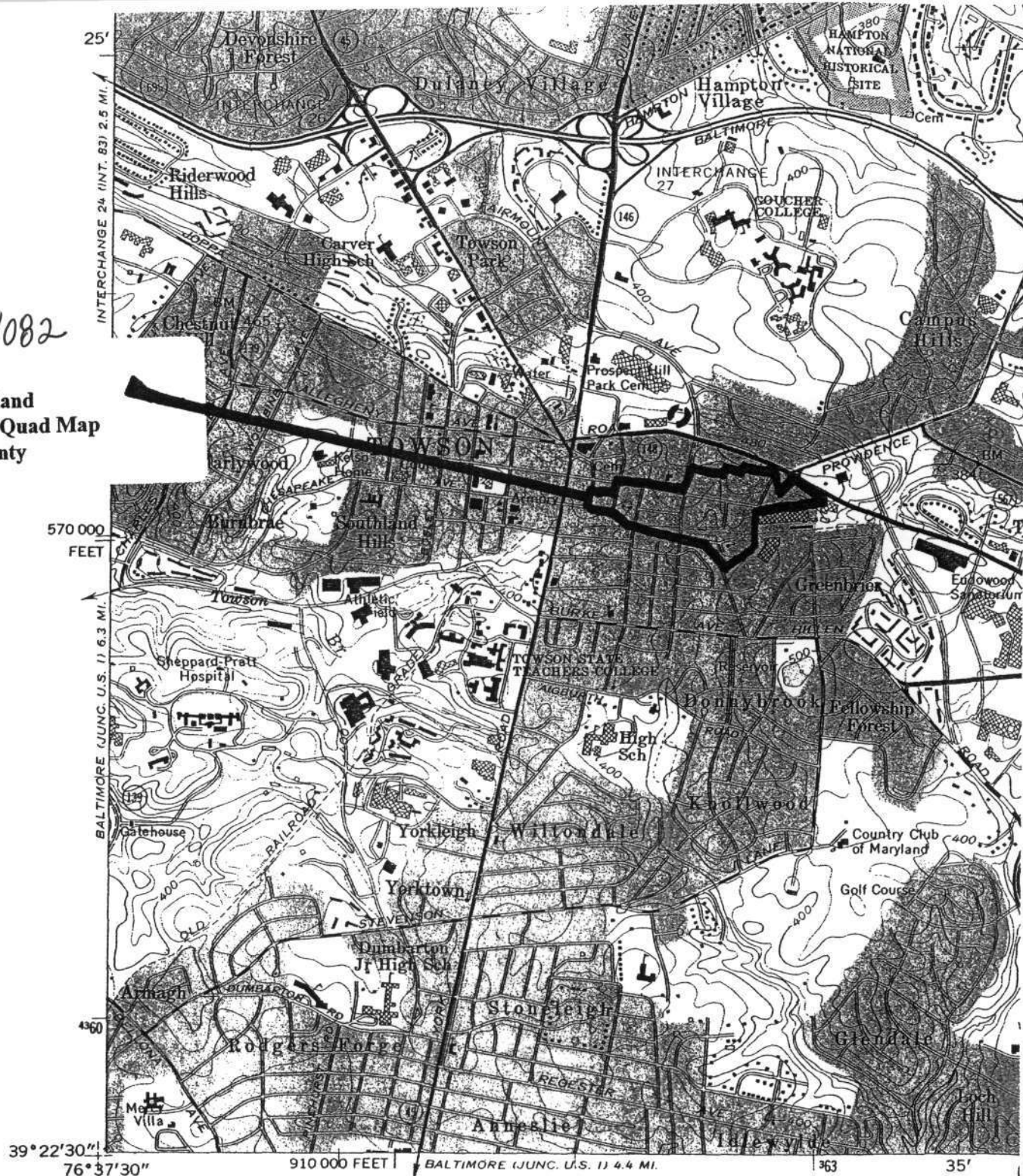
100 0 100 200 Feet

Legend

- Study Area Boundary
- Paved Roads
- Unpaved Roads
- Paved Parking / Driveways
- Hydrographic Features
- Buildings
- Vegetation

Data Sources:
Planimetric Data: Baltimore County OIT GIS Services Unit (1:2400)
Parcel Boundaries: Baltimore County OIT GIS Services Unit (1:2400)
Study Area: Baltimore County Office of Planning (1:2400)
Coordinate System:
Maryland State Plane: NAD83/91 Horizontal Datum
Elevations in Feet: NAVD88 Vertical Datum
Date of Data Capture: March 1996
Scale of Data Capture: 1" = 100'

BA 1082
East Towson
Towson, Maryland
Towson USGS Quad Map
Baltimore County



(BALTIMORE WEST)
8652 SW

Mapped by the Army Map Service
Edited and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, and Maryland
Bureau of Control Surveys and Maps

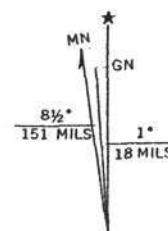
Culture and drainage in part compiled from aerial photographs
taken 1943. Topography by planetable surveys 1944
Culture revised by the Geological Survey 1957

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Maryland coordinate system
1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 18, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only
landmark buildings are shown

Revisions shown in purple compiled by the Geological Survey from
aerial photographs taken 1966 and 1974. This information not
field checked

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



UTM GRID AND 1974 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



BA-1082

HOUSE, 414 RAILROAD AVENUE

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRAILERIES

10/2001

MD-SHPD

WEST ELEVATION

1 of 4



BA-1082

HOUSE, 414 RAILROAD AVENUE

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRAILERIES

10/2001

MD-SHPD

SOUTHEAST CORNER

2 OF 4



BA-1082

HOUSE, 414 RAILROAD AVENUE

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

10/2001

MD-SHPO

NORTHEAST CORNER

3 of 4



BA-1082

SHED, 414 RAILROAD AVENUE

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRAILERIES

10/2001

MD-SHPD

SOUTHWEST CORNER

4 OF 4

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

JOHNSON HOUSE

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

414 Railroad Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Towson

VICINITY OF Baltimore

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland 21204

COUNTY

3 CLASSIFICATION**CATEGORY**☐ DISTRICT☐ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT**OWNERSHIP**☐ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☐ BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS**☐ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS**ACCESSIBLE**☐ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO**PRESENT USE**☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

George J. Shamer

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

BA-1082

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☒ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☐ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☐ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

414 Railroad Avenue.

Probably built after Robert H. Johnson acquired a lot in 1893. He was charged with a "small house" in 1896 tax ledger. Shown in 1898 atlas as R. Johnson's. Frame house in late Victorian style, two storeys, L-shaped, one- cross gable and one diamond shaped window. Main block two bays wide with a three-bay wing on south. Gable roof. Green composition shingles. Fair condition.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

BA-1082

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1893-1896

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION _____

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Mr. John McGrain

ORGANIZATION

Baltimore Co. Office of Planning & Zoning

STREET & NUMBER County Courts Bldg.

401 Bosley Avenue

CITY OR TOWN

Towson

DATE

5/78

TELEPHONE

823-1849

STATE

Maryland 21204

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The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438